ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.
ED001838	NA	No. 1

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

4. AUTHOR(S):
Mead, Margaret

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED:
A Creative Life for Your Children

6. PUBLICATION TITLE:
Children's Bureau Headliner Series

MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE YES ☒ NO ☐

COPYRIGHT GRANTED YES ☐ NO ☒

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED YES ☐ NO ☐

TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☐
FINAL ☒
FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

7. EDITOR(S):
NA

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN
ORG. Children's Bureau
Welfare Administration
ST. U.S. Department of Health,
CITY, STATE Education, &
Welfare, Wash., D.C.
TELE. EXT.
INST/LOC CODE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C.

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
NA	NA	1962	41

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR: report

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

adolescence	child rearing			
creativity	learning process			
child development	parental role			
early childhood	self-expression			

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The creative spirit begins its growth with a child's attempts to understand the world about him and to express his feelings. Preservation and nurture of the creative spirit can help a child grow into a creative, constructive adult.

The concepts of child development and child rearing implicit in the White House Conference on Children and Youth are applied. If children find their world trustworthy, and adults interesting and understanding, they will share the treasures of their minds and hearts: their stories, their poetry, their love of rhythm and music, their search for rich experiences. They love language; they enjoy the taste and color and flavor of their experiences in a way that is creative in the best sense of the word. By "a creative life for children" is meant a creative life for all children, not only specially talented or specially bright children.

Learning is creative, and the role of parents in their children's growing understanding of the world is discussed. Creativity takes many different forms. The child's life widens when he enters school, and even more when he reaches adolescence. Young people whose early childhood did not provide a ground plan for their relationship to themselves, to the world, to other people, are given a new chance to find themselves in adolescence.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OF PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

ED001838

TD

a creative life for your children

MARGARET MEAD

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a creative life for your children

MARGARET MEAD
American Museum of Natural History

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Welfare Administration • Children's Bureau • 1962

foreword

The child under whose searching hands the lump of wet clay takes form is making his own creation. The child who discovers books is finding new understanding. The child who is able to explore freely the universe of sound, movement, color, words, relationships is finding his own place in the world from which he can surely receive much richness and from which he may uniquely give richness in return.

Living creatively starts from ideas—and children are full of ideas—ideas that they are eager to express, ideas they must express if they are to live fully as a child and as an adult.

If we can preserve and foster the creative spirit that begins its growth in a child's attempts to understand the world about him and allow him freedom in expressing how he feels about it, we will help him grow into a creative, constructive adult.

This was the essence of the theme of the Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth—and it is this theme that Margaret Mead, with rare insight and sensitivity, elaborates in this pamphlet. Vividly carrying its meaning forward, she applies the concepts of child development and child rearing implicit in all the Conference findings and recommendations.

If children find their world trustworthy and adults interested and understanding, they will share with us the treasures of their minds and hearts: their stories, their poetry, their love of rhythm and music, their search for rich experiences. We find they have thoughts we never dreamed they had—and they are able to express them in new and fresh ways. They love language, they enjoy the taste and color and flavor of their experiences in a way that is creative in the best sense of the word. Through these paths, they find an outlet and release for joy, fear, hate, love, pressure, and even crisis.

Is what the child produces with words, poetry; with clay, sculpture; with painting, art; with dramatic play, drama? They are, in the sense that they represent the child's effort to interpret and understand the world around him; they serve as the fount from which all creative endeavors spring; they are the way a culture travels from one generation to another. All of this is what makes each day we live with children of such vast importance to us, to them, to our country, and to the world of tomorrow, so dimly seen by us, but so close and vital to our children.

The Children's Bureau and everyone associated with children owe Margaret Mead a great debt of gratitude for giving us a glimpse of what a creative life for children can mean to us as parents and teachers; to them as purveyors of the future.

Katherine B. Oettinger

KATHERINE B. OETTINGER
Chief, Children's Bureau

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a creative life for your children

I. A Child Is a Person

IN A DEMOCRACY a child is a person from the moment of birth. He is not just a future citizen or a future subject or a future adult. Now, in the present, he is a real person. Each day is a day to be lived to the full—to the full capacity of the child who is 2 days old or 2 months or 2 years old. With her 2-day-old child, a mother can look only for his breathing softly in and out. At 2 months she can look for a smile when the child hears her voice or sees her face. The 2-year-old may have a few words to describe the dandelions on the lawn, and the 4-year-old may wonder why they are named after lions. And it is true, the younger the child is, the more each day counts because it is a larger fraction of the child's whole life. One day in the life of a 2-day-old child is half of his whole life, and if he is ill or unhappy, he has indeed been ill or unhappy for half of his lifetime. From the standpoint of lifelong growth, the days and weeks of infancy, the weeks and months of childhood, and the months and years of adolescence are crucially important.

But each day and week, each month and year is valuable in itself. A second birthday is a day that a mother greets with a sigh of regret because her child will never be *just* two again. But the day after and the day after that are "ages," too, ages to be given their full due of living and growing—feeling the wind that blows that day or experiencing a unique event and later knowing that it happened. Someday he will say, "We all looked at the Satellite Echo the day I was 2 years and a week old. My mother told me. My brother was 4 days old then. He was still in the hospital, and he didn't see it. I can't remember seeing it. But I know I did." Because the parents felt that each day was a special day in the child's life, being held up at night to watch a different kind of light flashing across the sky was a delight then and now can be a memory in which the child's sense of identity from then until now can be felt as one.

Americans show their consciousness that each age has its own distinctive character by all the things that are fitted to the child's size, not only the crib and the cradle gym and the bathinette, but the small chair and table, too, and the special bowl and cup and spoon which together make a child-size world out of a corner of the room. In some societies, children sit where adults do, or they may be held on

adult laps or carried on their mothers' backs. But in America they have chairs of their own, high chairs to bring them up on a level with adults and little chairs at little tables where they can look at little books, even little cloth books that can be dropped into the bathtub without harm. In this nursery world, a child moves around on sure legs. He is not forever climbing or slipping or clinging; he walks over to his own chair and sits down on it like any other person.

Very early, too, American children become persons who have things of their own. Not only their clothes and the fitted sheets for the crib, but things that are their very own—a rattle and a bobbing plastic duck, which mother learns to ask for as politely, if she wants to take them away, as she would ask someone for the newspaper he was reading. For, after all, it is ***Junior's*** rattle, even though it is also described as "the pink and white one Aunt Eleanor gave him." It is ***his*** rattle now, and he learns both to give it to mother and to reach out commandingly to get it back again. More important, perhaps, the child learns to give and receive and give again all kinds of things, whether the things given and received are toys or food or other possessions. The child's name, too, is his own and belongs to no one else in the family in his generation. If a boy is named after his father, then his father is Big-Joe and he is Little-Joe or Young-Joe, and a girl named after her mother is Little-Sue, but in any case they are themselves and their names are their own. And, later, when the child meets another child with the same name, the experience that "he's Joe—or she's Sue—too" is a further extension of being a person.

Wherever the family goes, even the smallest child has a place. A place for his crib, a place for his chair and for his car seat, and, later, places for rubbers and scooter and schoolbooks. This place which is "mine" and

which is defended vigorously against all comers is also part of the "now" in which each American child lives. His scooter or bicycle is his ***now,*** not so that later he will be able to learn to drive a car or pilot a plane but because he is old enough now to enjoy riding a scooter or a bicycle.

Even the familiar American dream that any boy can become President or, today, the idea that any boy may grow up to make a journey to the moon or explore a distant planet is not a way of saying that what is done as a child matters as preparation for something to be done later. Describing one of a million children, each of whom ***might*** become President or make a landing on the moon, this is a way of saying something important about being an American child in the second half of the 20th century. When Jimmy says, "I'm going to be a senator," or Alice says, "I'm going to be a ballerina," they are really saying, "This is part of life now, to dream of being a senator or a ballerina." In the same way—

I'm old! so old I can write a letter;
My birthday lessons are done:
The lambs play always, they know no better;
They are only one times one.

And so, too, the little girl whose actor parents were far away in Australia could say, "I was so sorry for my parents because they missed my twelfth birthday."

The American sense that a child is a person every day of his life comes partly out of our past. In any family, the first people who came to this country—whether they are now parents or grandparents or so many generations removed that most people have stopped counting—were grown up when they came here and ***their*** children were the first children in that family to be born as Americans. So each day of the child's life took on, and today still takes on, this extra feeling that the child was, and is, living a life that his parents never lived. Today, with the speed of change in the world, this is true also of children whose parents were themselves born here. The child is living in an age the parents never knew. Never before was anyone 2 years and a week old when the first satellite was launched. And, of course, only this one group of 2-year-olds will ever see the first weather satellite at the age of two. So the excitement of a first moment in history and a moment in our children's lives are woven together in our minds.

American children are given many advantages through this emphasis on the present—on today, this week, this year, this Christmas, this summer, this spring when the daffodils first come out, this year when we can see the Thanksgiving parade, when we will watch for a hummingbird's nest because he will be old enough to enjoy it. If food is scarce, the children are thought of first. If money is scarce, the children's clothes and delights come before things for adults. If a choice has to be made between green grass for children or a shorter commuting trip for father, the children will get the green grass.

The American habit of thinking of children's lives as valuable in themselves while they are living each day and also as different from any kind of life their parents have ever lived makes it easier for us to meet new values for childhood. One of these new values is ***creativeness.*** Creativeness is a new desire, so new that although we are asking it for our children, many people are not quite sure what it means.

What does it mean to be sure that your children have a ***creative*** life? It does not mean that every American child should spend his childhood learning the things we think of as especially creative in the adult world—painting pictures, making scientific discoveries, building new organizations, healing the sick, binding the peoples of the earth together in new ways. These are the kinds of things we call creative when an adult brings into being

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something new, something that has never existed in the world before. The skills needed for this kind of adult creation require very hard work, learning to write, to think, to paint, to experiment, to compose music. And so if we go directly to childhood from a picture of this kind of creative adult, we are likely to picture a child spending many long hours practicing at a piano or working in a studio or a laboratory while other children are out at play. We think, too, of the kinds of parents who have decided that their children have talents which must be developed.

This is not what a creative childhood means. When we say that one of the ideals for American parents in the late 20th century is to provide a creative childhood for their children, we do not mean a preparation for using some special talent later but rather a creative life now, while they are children that will lead into many kinds of adulthood. Some children with special interests may want to practice the piano or spend hours with chemistry experiments or edit a newspaper or give plays in the garage. But it is not these special things that we are talking about.

Often what we mean by creativity in an adult is an extra ability to originate something that makes the things that person does so significant and conspicuous that his name is known to millions and goes down in history. And we neglect the ways in which people not only relate themselves to masterpieces but also are creative about smaller things in their own right. By a creative life for children, we mean a creative life for all children—not only specially talented children or specially bright children or children with some gift for seeing and hearing differently from others, but all children. We mean the kind of creativity that is possible for every child in every kind of home in every kind of community. We mean a chance for every child, as he grows and comes to understand the world, to make new a part of the world he sees. It means giving children a chance to do in play, as they grow, the kind of thing that is done by poets and landscape architects, scientists and statesmen to such a superb degree.

This may seem to be contradictory. If only a few adults have such great creativity, how can all children be creative? This is

partly because during the time they are growing, their whole being is involved with growing taller, stronger, and more mature, and growth itself is creative. Each day is a new day. The child makes it so because the child has grown. This is the day when, for the first time in the world, Jimmy or Betty can stand, or swim a hundred yards, or climb the tallest pine tree in the wood. As creativity is essentially making something new, all those who are busy growing are naturally creative.

It is partly because learning is creative, and little children are learning at a more tremendous rate than they ever will again. Learning to speak, they are making language itself as they find out what words mean, how words are put together, what is the difference between *I* and *you, I* and *me, go* and *gone.* Later, when they are older, they will use language as easily as they wear their clothes, and most people will use language in an everyday fashion only rarely with the thrill of discovery and creation that a child has. Learning anything for the first time, when it is learned by someone who experiences the learning as something that he or she did, is being creative.

The way in which parents and teachers let a child learn how to play with his fingers and toes, what the names of the things around him are, what happens when you try to divide a round thing like a cake into seven equal parts, whether you can touch a rainbow or catch a "light bird" reflected on the ceiling through a prism, what a turtle does when you tap its shell, how you know it is Tuesday or where Florida is or Idaho, do houses die—this is one thing which determines whether or not a child will have a creative childhood. Each of these things can be overtaught in such a way that the parents' knowledge that "everyone knows this" becomes more real to the child than his own sense that, for him, it is a brand new, shining, and wonderful idea.

Some parents may find it easier to understand creativity in this sense and to put themselves in the child's place by comparing the child's experience at home and at school with an adult's trip to a strange country. There everything is fresh and new. The newcomer doesn't understand a word people are saying. They are making a lot of sounds, but whether a particular sound means *yes* or *no, stop* or *go, hello* or *goodbye* is a mystery. Then each word and phrase one learns—*please, two not three, how much*—is an adventure, and each time one uses a new word or phrase, one feels extraordinarily good. Then a bus ride or a ferry ride safely accomplished, with only a few words of the language to help oneself along, makes one feel "I made it!" Made what? A trip on a strange ferry, buying a ticket, asking directions, understanding the answers in a strange language. This is something the traveler never has done before. He can appropriately say, "I made it," not simply, "I did it, I took the ferry," as he would say of a ferry ride he took everyday at home.

II. Understanding the World

FOR THE GROWING, learning child, every day is filled with just such ferry crossings—launching out into strangeness and finding the way triumphantly through part of that strangeness. The small child becomes aware of a sudden sound. The sound starts and stops. Sometimes it is so loud it wakes you up. After a while the child learns that the sound happens in the same corner of the room where there is a black (or today it may be a red or yellow or blue) thing that comes apart into two parts, a thing that mother or father sometimes holds. Then the child learns that when one part is picked up, still connected by a cord to the other part (but "connected" is too hard an idea, still somehow part of the other part), the sound stops. This is a great discovery. Someone goes to the telephone, picks up one part of it; the sound of ringing stops. This is a piece of a pattern. It will happen again. Instead of being frightened when the telephone rings, the child can wait and watch; soon, someone will come and pick up the receiver, and the ringing will stop. The next discovery may come weeks or months later. A telephone is something to talk to. Mother or father picks up the receiver and talks into it. The child waits for that, too, and learns that after the talking, the receiver will be put back where it was when the ringing began. This, too, is a piece of a pattern, something understood and expected. The next step, more wonderfully exciting perhaps than the others, comes when the receiver is placed at the child's ear and he hears a voice, a familiar voice, Daddy's voice.

At this moment the difference between letting a child learn and overteaching comes in. The parent sets the stage either by putting the receiver to the child's ear or by letting the child try to do what he has seen the adults do—put the receiver to his own ear. Then mother can say firmly, "Now listen to Daddy," or "Say hello to Daddy." Or mother can wait until it slowly dawns on the delighted child that he is hearing Daddy. Putting the receiver to the child's ear, telling the child who is speaking and what to say robs the child of that experience. It robs the child of the thrill the adult gets as he suddenly begins to understand a few words of a strange language.

The child has accumulated information about telephones. Where the ring comes from, what makes the ringing stop, what grownups do when it rings, that if you listen you can hear someone talking when the someone isn't in the room. There is a telephone in Grandma's house, too, and you can hear Grandma's voice on your home telephone and mother's voice on Grandma's telephone. A child who lives in the country learns that those tall wooden poles are called telephone poles. The part of the telephone called the receiver is fastened to the other part by a long black string, the telephone is fastened to the wall by another long black string, and there are long strings between the telephone poles. Swallows sit on the strings in the evening, and mother says, "Hear the humming in the telephone wires." The child asks, "Can I telephone Daddy?" Mother explains, "Not just now, because Daddy has left

his office. He is on the way home." On his way home, driving in the car, on the road where the telephone poles are, but . . . . A question, "Is there a telephone in Daddy's car?" Again mother explains, "No Tommy, a telephone needs wires, you see." What is a wire? Strings, cords, wires that hum, a telephone at Grandma's and at the office where Daddy works and here, but no telephone in Daddy's car . . . suddenly the whole complicated pattern takes shape. The telephones stay in places, the wires go between. "Mommy, can I telephone Grandma?"

This is the creative moment. The child, like Alexander Graham Bell, has just created the telephone—suddenly, from all the little bits and pieces of slowly understood meanings, the idea of the telephone has come up. Now to test it. If the idea is right, an idea much too complicated for words, then the way to test it is to telephone Grandma. The busy mother who fails to recognize what is going on may have a totally inexplicable temper tantrum on her hands as the child, balked at the edge of discovery, screams, "I will telephone Grandma, I will, I will, I will!" The mother who has time to see what is happening will help dial Grandma, simultaneously racking her brain for some substitute, someone to telephone to if Grandma isn't home. But the next question may still leave her guessing, "Mommy, can birds telephone?" If she is lucky enough to remember those swallows sitting on the humming wires that they saw in the country last week, this won't be too hard. "No, Tommy, birds don't talk the way people do. But birds do sit on telephone wires the way we sit on the front porch."

However, for the child who lives in the city, the problem of the telephone may be more difficult, for there are no visible wires. But other connections that are made without wires are there to wonder about. The parade is going along downtown on a familiar street, yet the parade is here, too, on the TV set in our living room. The wonders of modern communication will slowly begin to dawn. Later, the school child is faced with the wonderful paradoxes of its being one time in London and another in New York and of the short plane trip where the plane arrives before it started. As a school child, he will enjoy the contemporary version of the limerick:

> **There was a young lady named Bright,**
> **Whose speed was much faster than light,**
> **She went out one day**
> **In a relative way**
> **And returned on the previous night.**

"I don't suppose, Grandma, that you really understand that," he may say in a lofty tone, already knowing that he is the inheritor of a future of which his grandparents could have had no vision at the same age.

Or take the toddler with only a few words who suddenly begins to move around the room touching things and saying, "Bottle." He is touching all sorts of things, and each time he repeats, "Bottle." The mother who is not alert to what each moment means to her

child may just say as he pokes his finger at an ashtry, "No, Billy, that's not a bottle." Or she may firmly show him a bottle or put his hand on one, "This is a bottle." Had she been watching more closely, she would have seen that the child was not mixed up about what a bottle is, was not tiresomely and stupidly saying, "Bottle, bottle, bottle," over and over again for the fun of chanting the word. What were the things he touched? A glass ashtray, a window pane, a glass vase, the glass pane in the door, a glass lamp. Suddenly he has the idea that some things can be transparent, some things can be seen through. To ask about it, to get his idea straight, he is using the only word he knows for something that is transparent. "Bottle?" He is asking a question, not making a statement of solid fact. "Bottle?" is an appeal to the grownup to confirm his discovery that there are really a lot of different transparent things in the world. If his mother follows him as he moves around, as he touches one transparent thing after another, agreeing with the likeness, letting the word go for the time being, she will have kept for him this moment of creativity when he made something new in the world, transparency, as surely as the first man who learned how to make glass.

But sometimes the child's creation is not, as the discovery of the telephone or of glass was, simply a fresh, individual understanding of something that has been discovered, invented, or made by adults. Instead, it is a frightening nightmare combination of misunderstood bits. A new doorbell is put in, one that rings much louder than the old one. On the same day, a new, noisier vacuum cleaner is delivered and is put away in a corner just under the place where the new clanging bell rings. The bell rings; the child cringes and looks toward the corner from which the sound is coming. A little later, mother takes the vacuum cleaner out of the corner, and the machine makes a horrible new sound. The child runs away from the vacuum cleaner, screaming. Here, too, the child has been creative. He has made something new, a noisy monster that lives in a noisy corner. It will take a little patience to sort out this new creation so that the child learns that the vacuum cleaner and the bell have nothing to do with each other, and that neither is dangerous.

Or consider the words, ***It is Monday.*** "Monday" is spoken in a different tone of voice from "Sunday" or "Saturday." It is Monday, and everyone is cross. The older children can't find their schoolbooks. Alice's mother has trouble packing the lunch because the sandwich bags were all used for the Sunday picnic. Sunday picnic—Sunday is different from Monday. "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday"—that comes out of a book with pictures of a dog on the page, a dog who looks like Shep. "Shep, come here! you can't go in the car today!" "What day is it?" "It's Monday." Did the dog on the page mean Monday? Slowly, through many blue Mondays, Alice wonders, cogitates, collects evidence, sometimes thinking, sometimes only noting. On Monday everyone is cross. Monday is the day when everyone goes somewhere, father to work and the big children to school, and everyone is cross. Monday comes after Sunday. Then on a day that is ***not*** Monday, mother is very cross about everything. Alice asks, "Mommy, is it Monday?" Again the answer will make a difference in the child's discovery and in the way the child's life is, and will continue to be, creative. For the same reason as the one that made her so irritable, the mother may say, "No, it's not Monday. Now stop talking and eat your cereal." Then the moment is gone. Instead, she may take time to say, "No, Alice, today is Tuesday. You know, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. But I'm so tired I feel as if it was Monday, and Monday is the day when everyone feels tired because they have to go back to work. The weekend is over and they have to go back to work." Then the child is left with her discovery about the mysterious nature of Monday. And she shares something of the creativeness of the man who first invented a calendar, for example, by calling every third day "market day," the day

when markets could be held, and then realizing that the other two days, when there was no market, could be given names that meant "the day-before-market-day" and "the day-after-market-day." And behold, there was a 3-day week and a way of telling one day from another.

Each time a piece of learning like this takes place, we realize anew the extraordinary quantity of knowledge that all young children are absorbing, even in a home where the parents are busy and harassed or are very little informed. The child is learning who he is and what he is, what the difference is between things that are alive and things that are not, between human beings and animals or insects, between the familiar and the unfamiliar, what is *up* and what is *down,* and what is *across.* When we talk about making a child's life creative, we are in a way talking about adding something new to this natural absorption of the world—about how to make the learning that will take place anyway be more meaningful and more alive.

One very important way is to provide the conditions within which the child himself can discover the complex things in the house, in the town, in the natural world, with just enough help to be sure the clues are right. Ants live in ant hills. If you follow them from the spilled sugar to the place where they are going in a straight line, each carrying a tiny crystal of sugar, you will find where they came from. What is honey? What is a bee? A few days later, a sting teaches all too well what a bee is. But what has honey to do with stings? It may take a trip to the country or a picture in a book and a honeycomb to provide the information the child needs—the facts of the hive, the bees coming and going looking for clover, the beeswax. Left all alone with wonder and questions and doubt about the connections between what happens at the same time or in the same place or with the same word used for two different things, the child is often lonely, frightened, in despair for fear he can *never make sense* of the world. "Mrs. Jones calls her little girl 'honey.' Is she a bee?" Children need the help of grownups to get a lot of these things straight.

Because the child, growing and learning, creates anew the experience of inventing a calendar or a telephone or of discovering the idea of transparency, people sometimes speak as if children were repeating the history of the human race. Long ago, mankind had to learn where honey comes from, how to make a calendar, how to make rope, how to weave, and many, many centuries later, Benjamin Franklin attracted electricity from the clouds, and, still later, the telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell. A child, as he learns something that adults already know, is repeating not the history of the human race but only the history of human children. Children in each generation have to re-create all the discoveries and creations of previous generations. Once upon a time, no one could count to six. But the child who is playing with the silver drawer or the kitchen utensils and who, discovering six knives and six forks and six teaspoons and six tablespoons, suddenly discovers *sixness,* is not making an original discovery of the same kind as the man who learned to count beyond five. The sixness is there in the half-dozen spoons and half-dozen forks, and it is expressed in all sorts of half-dozens as mother counts the laundry or orders rolls. Children discover for themselves the wonders that their parents and teachers already know. Those few who keep the freshness of a child's mind can go on to the other kind of creativity as adults.

Some people have also thought that a child has a more creative life if he lives very simply, perhaps on a small farm, and that things like candles are easier to understand than electric lights, wood fires than gas stoves. They think that because the child lives a simple life among things that are easier to understand, this will somehow make the child's understanding more creative. But this is not

necessarily so. If a child's father is a farmer who knows a great deal about plants and animals and can understand what the child is wondering about and where his questions are leading, life on a farm can be very creative. And if a child's father is a skilled mechanic who understands about radio and TV and electric stoves and a.c. and d.c. current, then living in a city as the child of a skilled mechanic can be equally creative. What the child needs is someone wiser and more experienced than he is to whom he can go for an explanation when he is puzzled.

Today our children's lives are limited by the number of things in their world about which they are led to wonder and which they want to make anew; but no one in their own family or in the neighborhood knows enough to give them the answers. City children ask questions about animals. They see snatches of animal life on TV, at the circus, at the zoo, in books. They ask questions about stags fighting in the spring. They ask why wrens and martins make their nests in the eaves of houses built by men, or what would happen if a duck was adopted by a human being, or how birds find their way home in a storm. They wonder why human women dress up but male peacocks have the beautiful feathers. Country children wonder about telephones and electric stoves or how the gas brought to the house in tanks

"works." Today, also, children see and hear the names of countries that did not exist as nations when their parents went to school—Laos, Ghana, Indonesia. Newscasts on TV introduce them to a world that is unfamiliar to their parents.

Each part of the rich and varied world is something which the child must make anew, within which he must be creative—the new automatic toy, the power steering on the car, the specially bred poultry, the news from Southeast Asia, the orbiting satellite. But if his interest is interfered with, a mind that might have become creative becomes dull. Growing up among all these varied, changing things, children will learn about each, and in that learning feel a sense of discovery if they do not meet with roadblocks in their parents' lack of interest.

Roadblocks are often the result of exasperation. The child always seems to be asking questions, asking the same questions over and over, harping on things. This is almost a sure sign that the child does not yet have the answer he needs to a question—and this is not necessarily the question he seems to be asking. Lack of knowledge of any particular part of the world—machinery or how things grow or rockets or economics or politics—is not the thing that matters. Parents, however learned, cannot follow with full enthusiasm and provide the missing bit of information that children need in every field. But all parents can be alert to what children are thinking about, and as children get older, parents can find paths for them to follow to the things they need. The special path may be a series of TV programs on rockets or the other side of the moon; it may be the local library where a librarian can find books with pictures; it may be a museum. As long as parents realize their children's need to look, wonder, re-create for themselves each new thing they encounter, they can give them a sense that somewhere in the community or in the Nation or in the world the answer is known. Or, if it is not known, that in the future—somewhere—an answer will be discovered.

As present day adults grew up in 20th century America, they encountered change and learned to think about change. From horses and wagons, we went to automobiles, from railroads to trucks, from trains to airplanes, from four-motored piston airplanes to jets, from ferries and taxis to helicopters. Years ago, it was like ***that***—the milkman, with his horse and wagon, delivered the milk at dawn and on cold winter mornings the cream at the top of the bottle froze. Now it is like ***this.*** And, most Americans are able to add, no one knows what wonderful things "they" will do next.

But the child encounters everything at once. On one street he sees the rickety horse-drawn cart with spring flowers in pots, the old cars and the new. He sees electric lights and candles lighted in the same house. To him, these things are all contemporaneous. He does not know what is very old, what is new, what was discovered yesterday. Each discovery is new to him, and time is measured only by the number of days between one discovery and another. It is this packed quality which gives him such a sense that he himself is creating the world.

But to live in this changing world, the child has to learn that some things are very old, as the discovery of fire is, and that other things belong to the Middle Ages, as the armor does which knights in stories sometimes wear and which inspires small boys in cities to make shields out of garbage pail lids. His knowledge of early American history has to include some pictures of what a sailing ship was like. The sky was not always crisscrossed by planes; the child must learn to include the first flight of the Wright brothers in a longer sequence. Grandparents, either one's own grandparents or old people who live in the neighborhood, are valuable in giving this sense of time, this sense of continuing new discovery and change. When grandmother describes what it was like

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to walk 3 miles to school in the snow, "There were no school buses then, and sometimes when it rained father would drive us in the surry . . ." and how cold it was in school, "I have chilblains still . . ." and what it was like to drive at night with a flickering kerosene carriage lamp; then the past will come alive. The old remembering voice of someone who can be seen and touched can give the listening child his first sense of history.

This appreciation of changes that have happened already will give the child a sense of changes that are occurring now, that will occur. Something of the grandeur of man's long history—of the long series of discoveries and inventions that have made man more and more at home in the world—will come to the child. As this comes to him in a short time, the child can feel as if in his own lifetime he is, in a sense, retraveling the road by which his ancestors traveled from the cradle of the human race, over Europe or Africa or the islands of the Pacific to America and the present—and now out into space.

III. Fresh Delights

SO, even before the child has learned very many words or how to use his hands with much skill, he can wonder about the world around him and how things work—how day follows night, the "Monday" feeling follows the "Sunday" feeling, how telephones are used, and what makes the light go on. Time and space, what comes after what, and those parts of life with which the scientist and the inventor work come into the child's life very early. And all the senses are important—touch and taste, sight and sound and smell—and everything that can be done with and through the senses.

There are, however, many kinds of creativeness. Most often we use the word for those who make new and beautiful things like a poem, a picture, or a piece of music, and for those who, by the way they sing or dance or play a musical instrument, make the great creations of other people come alive. Among adults we often single out as creative only those who do this magnificently—the great poet or the great singer—forgetting how many transient delights are re-created each time they come about—the perfect party, the lovely garden, and the lullabies that are created anew each time they are sung.

During childhood, the child not only learns that his voice is a practical way of getting mother to come—first with a wail, then with a shout, and later with words—and of asking questions, he also learns that his voice is kind of a musical instrument, the first one human beings learned to use. So a child learns to crow and gurgle and coo. Later, listening to the lullaby his mother sings, or if she doesn't trust her own singing, the one she plays on the phonograph or the radio or TV, the child begins to sing in tune, to keep time with his spoon, to dance in her arms. A sense of rhythm is something a child can get into his body before he can walk. But he mustn't stop there, of course. If dancing and singing and listening to music, and perhaps playing a musical instrument, are to be part of a child's life, all this must go right on during the years between babyhood and kindergarten. Long ago, even in very musical countries like Italy and Germany, the kind of music people heard depended on whether or not there was a concert hall or an opera house in the town. Today with radio and TV and inexpensive long-playing records, every home can have the music that was once possible only for the fortunate few. And families can listen to all kinds of music—folk music, the lovely, old-fashioned songs our ancestors sang, music from other parts of the world—the sound of which will be less strange for our children to hear than it is for us—classical music, modern music.

Parents who are not very musical can still turn on some music while a child is playing happily by himself. It is a good idea to have it just be music without the sights that go with it on TV. Sometimes, because of TV, a child can both watch and listen to someone playing a guitar or a piano. Sometimes, especially after he knows what instruments are being played, he can just listen. As the child grows older, he may have small, inexpensive,

unbreakable records of his own and learn to turn on music on the radio.

But first of all come singing and dancing. These are the ways the child himself creates music and dance and so later will be able to listen and watch with delight. For a few children, responding to music, keeping time with a spoon on a cake tin or pounding the high chair tray will be so enjoyable that music may become the most important thing in life. These are the children who will want to take music lessons. They are the ones who will try to play an older brother's or sister's guitar, and later they will learn an instrument for the school band or sing in the school chorus or the church choir.

Out of the delight that all small children have in rhythm and melody and in making the sounds themselves come the musicians of the future, the singers of tomorrow, and the members of the audience who listen to them and feel re-created.

The other arts come more slowly than dancing and singing and beating out rhythms on pie pans. To make a picture, even though it is only a squiggle that you call a man, means first learning to hold a pencil or a crayon. To mold something out of soft clay or a bit of dough, to make mud pies or a pattern in wet sand, all these things take skill. The more the child learns to do simple things like feeding himself, putting on his own cap, tying his own shoes, setting his own little table, taking off his own galoshes, the more easily he will draw pictures or make things out of mud or clay or make a pattern out of dandelions or parsley or the outside leaves of a head of lettuce.

Children learn about patterns in all sorts of ways. Pictures on boxes, the design on a rug, stripes on a towel, flowers in a win-

dow box or in a flower bed, the design on a dress, pictures on a wall are all patterns. The lovelier the patterns and the more the people about them are conscious of pattern and design—the form of a bowl, the way some well-shaped dish feels in the palm of the hand—the more readily children, too, will recognize these things. A picture on the wall in good color and painted by an artist whose work is so good that the picture has hung in a thousand homes gives the child something to look at when he wakes up, something to watch and wonder about.

Once, great paintings hung only in palaces or cathedrals. Today, because of the marvelous new methods of reproducing color, a picture which in former ages would have hung over the cradle of a child who would someday be a prince or a princess can belong to a child in the simplest home, the home that is farthest away from the city where the original is kept in a museum. But this is all very new. Many parents grew up in homes without any pictures and never learned, at home or in school, how to judge between pictures and how to choose the kind of picture that will open the world of pictures to a child. One kind of thing that can help here is the guide to pictures which an art museum gets out; another is the scrapbook with stamps reproducing great pictures—paintings that hang far away in some European city—which the child can paste for himself.

We saw that in music and dance, a link has to be provided between the music and the child. The child himself has to sing and dance. This is true also of pictures and statues. It is not enough just to *see* them or even to stroke the stone lions on the library steps or the little stone cupids in the fountain in the park—though all this helps. The child has to find out what it is like to make a picture of something or to build a castle in the sand. It is especially important to have to struggle with the problem of how to put two eyes and a nose on a face. At first the child may draw a face like this. Now, if someone takes the crayon out of his

hand and does it "right," the whole joy of "trying to make something" is taken away. Later, this child will only want to play with coloring books or try to copy something very simple like a row of tulips or a pussycat. And the child will never know, as a child, what it is like to be an artist when one is grown up. The chances are very great that your child will not be an artist, for only a few people in any generation want to give their whole lives to painting or sculpture. But he needs to learn what it is like to be an artist, to make something that is entirely new and like nothing else in the world, all by himself.

Many adults are too busy, too shy, and too uncertain of their hands and eyes to trust themselves to paint or model in clay or to make anything more complicated than a flower bed or an iced design on a birthday cake. But children have not yet learned to be shy. Given

crayons, water colors, or poster paints, most children will rush ahead with delight making pictures that are bright and new and different.

It is part of the closeness between growth and creativity that the pictures painted by children are sometimes very delightful, amusing, even beautiful. It is fun to put them up on the wall to look at for a while, and it is fun to go to the kindergarten or first grade and see an "exhibit" of what your child has made. But it is a mistake to treat a child's work as something entirely permanent. It is something to be enjoyed now. Later it can be thrown away to make room for new pictures—or it can be put away, if you have room to keep mementos of each child. Otherwise a child may start copying himself, and no child's work is worth copying. It is important just because it is free and fresh and the child's own.

Doing creative things with words comes later than making bright-colored pictures on paper. If children hear a lot of poetry—if poems are read to them at home or they hear poetry in listening groups at school or in the library or on children's hours on TV—some of them may start to make up little verses for themselves. This is hard to do. Other children may be content to recite over and over some of the rhyming words they have heard:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are . . .

Roslein, Roslein, Rosleinrot,
Roslein auf den Heiden . . .

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night . . .

Au clair de le lune,
Mon ami Pierrot . . .

There was a knight riding from the east
Jennifer gentle an' rosemaree . . .

Adeste fidelis
Laeti triumphantes . . .

These are words heard, only half understood, whose lovely sound the child has caught and can repeat.

Memorizing poetry is one of the best ways of learning to use language beautifully and later on to write well—letters or reports, stories or articles or even poetry. Parents—and grandparents—who themselves enjoy memorizing can encourage children to do so, and grandma helps when she recites something she learned when she was a little girl and when she sings to the child who brings her a pussy willow:

I know a little pussy,
Her coat is silver gray,
She lives down in the meadow,
She never runs away.
She always was a pussy,
She'll never be a cat,
For she's a pussy willow.
Now what do you think of that?

Children also love to learn by heart the stories in their first books. This is a kind of "pretend reading." They learn which pictures go with which words; they can turn the pages and "read." This is an important step toward real reading. If children are encouraged to read many books full of pictures, very often they can learn to read before they go to school. But some children will be happy just listening and repeating the stories they hear, whether they are stories in rhyme or just stories. They are hungry to listen, and mothers who see that they hear many stories are giving them what they are hungry for. There are always some children—and they are likely to be boys—who want to hear the same story over and over, every night, for months. This may seem dull, but it means that they are learning something else—perhaps that life is reliable, that you can depend on good things to happen again. For children, as for most grownups, it is more fun to enjoy a good story written by someone else than to try to make one up.

But this is not true of all children. Some will never enjoy memorizing. Some will want to make up their own stories. They cannot put up with everything always happening in exactly the same way—with Red Riding Hood always having the same things in her basket, with Jack always going up the hill with Jill, with Mickey Mouse always meeting Goofy. They must make up the stories themselves or change them. It is important, then, that parents do not interfere and say, "But, Mary, Jack went up the hill with *Jill,* not Miss Muffet." All the good stories in the world have come from people who got tired of the old ones and changed them or made up new ones. So let the story go with old characters doing things with new ones and plots that don't make sense. Let the child work it out. Later the real storyteller will have time enough to work hard at learning how to write. The child now is playing at storytelling, playing at rhymes.

As children grow older, there are other kinds of play with words. There are the words that go with jumping rope and the words and rhymes for counting out in games. Then the time for riddles will come. Often the riddles do not seem very amusing to grownups who have forgotten how they used to enjoy asking, "Do you know Amos?" "Amos who?" "A mosquito." Or how they could ask again and again, "What's black and white and red all over?"

With the riddles come the jokes, the ones that children tell each other and the ones they make up. Most of these jokes seem pretty feeble to adults. But when children go to school and begin to laugh at jokes like these, parents come to realize the relationship between laughter and age. People of all ages can enjoy a baby's peal of laughter, and everybody, adults and older children, can play peek-aboo or engage in a chasing game that throws the child into an ecstacy of delighted laughter. But there comes a time when children seem to be laughing at nothing at all or at things that are not funny. Recognizing this difference between what is funny and what is not is one of the ways we realize that children have a world of their own. And it makes it harder for adults.

It is harder to laugh at a joke that is not funny or to take seriously an easy riddle than it is to enjoy a drawing of a man with two eyes on one side of his head. But the riddles and jokes are different from the little child's songs or the first marks he made with crayons. Riddles and jokes are games, and the child is learning about games—what a game is, this remarkable set of funny rules that make it possible for pairs or groups of children or grownups to play together and not quarrel, most of the time. A child who does not learn about games and rules is terribly handicapped in playing with other children. When someone asks a riddle it is a rule that the other person has to guess—or at least pretend to guess. The child knows you are pretending just as in other games when people pretend to be "it" or "dead." So it is proper to appreciate the question, "Why did the moron tiptoe past the medicine cabinet?" ("So he wouldn't wake up the sleeping pills.")

Just as the jokes and riddles don't seem very funny, so the things older children take seriously often do not seem so very serious—the argument about whether the batter really did get to first base, the importance of telephoning to a schoolmate just half an hour after school is out, the absolute necessity of having a particular kind of catcher's mitt. Here the games shade into real life. The older children are still playing games, but at the same time they are learning what it means to abide by the rules, to keep a promise, to keep in step with companions, to carry through a plan.

Some of the first games that parents play with their children lead not to formal games like hopscotch or hide-and-seek or baseball or checkers or chess, but to another kind of "play." This is the play which in the

grownup world is the movie or the stage play. It begins with games of "make-believe"—a game like "peekaboo," in which the grownup and the baby pretend that the grownup has gone away, and every time the handkerchief comes off the grownup's face the baby explodes with delight. The same exploding laughter comes later when the child can hide and mother tries to find him, when father pretends he is a lion, when the child pretends ***be*** is a lion. This laughter is part of the way human beings learn to be less frightened. The baby is terribly afraid mother will go away—so he rocks with laughter when it is only play. The 2-year-old who hides is terribly afraid she won't be caught. Father is very big and something like a giant anyway. When he turns into a lion, this is both more and less frightening because, after all, he is not really a lion even if he is a giant man.

Little children invent all sorts of plays of their own, little girls with dolls, boys and girls with dolls or toy animals or pets or other, often younger children. They play father and mother. They play doctor and nurse. They play school. They spank and scold their children; they play that they are far away, that their parents are dead, that there is an air raid, that they are getting married. The plays that children make up themselves are just one step away from the plays that were invented ages ago, plays like peekaboo, or "Here's the church and here's the steeple . . ." or "This little pig went to market . . ." or

Here's a ball for baby,
Big and soft and round,
Here's the baby's hammer,
See how he can pound!

Later, out on the playground, on the block, or in one's own room, there are new kinds of plays. Girls daydream about riding horses. Of course, very few of them have real horses to ride, but they have little glass or pottery horses, pieces of riding costume, or books about horses. The spurs one girl hangs on the wall, the copy of ***National Velvet*** another keeps by her bedside, the four little Chinese pottery horses another stands on her desk—all are part of one great shared daydream for American little girls.

This is the time when boys and girls have least in common. The girls are growing faster and wanting very hard to be grown up;

the boys are holding back, wanting to be males but not men yet. Boys play with the complexities of machinery, radios, or rockets. Sometimes a boy builds a small scene in which he himself is the engineer constructing the bridge; sometimes he builds models or acts out whole scenes. If boys are given space and materials, their creativity can begin to relate itself to what is going on in the world around them. Girls, as they daydream and talk and read about horses, are thinking about growing up and moving away and being in command of their lives; sometimes they are the horses, and sometimes the riders. So, too, boys, as they think about rockets and atomic submarines, are thinking about what they are going to be, as males and as men, when they are older.

When they reach adolescence and the whole question of establishing a separate identity comes to preoccupy them, there will again be an element of "let's pretend," of trying on a new personality for a day or a week. Girls will change their hairdo every week. Boys will experiment with different clothes and different kinds of language, and they will be gruff or nonchalant or haughtily sneering, looking at life from many different angles, trying to find the angle that is their own.

It is just as important for children to make up their own plays as it is for them to make up their own stories and paint their own pictures. Later, in school and on religious holidays, they will begin to be "in plays." And some day a very few of them may act in a great and famous play like ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** or ***Romeo and Juliet.*** But in nursery plays with dolls and toys and pets, the child is not only an actor, he is the playwright also, the creator, making up life as the play goes along, making it new, making it the way it ought to be or could be or might be.

Children who do a lot of playmaking may want to "give a play." This means exactly what it says. The play has to be given to someone, to an audience, to people who come and watch and clap. Audiences never come until they are invited, until the time and the place have been announced. Then they should come and sit and watch—and clap. (Some children may never want an audience. What goes on between a little boy and a whole menagerie of woolen animals—a bear, a tiger, an elephant, a kangaroo, and a monkey—may be very strictly his private play.)

This is one of the touchiest parts of giving children a creative life. Parents have to help. Children who don't hear music won't learn to enjoy it. Children who don't hear singing won't learn to sing. Children who aren't danced with won't learn to dance. It takes both pictures on the wall and paper and crayons to give a child the idea that he can make a picture. And, continually, children come to want an audience, someone who will "watch while I dance," and "listen to me sing," and "see my picture—that's the President going to the moon," and "listen to my story," and "come to our play."

Yet while children want an audience, they want to do it all by themselves. The parent who steps in too eagerly to correct the tune or the dance step, to put a few lines in the drawing (or even criticize it), the parent who, unasked, offers to make the costumes for the play or to umpire the ball game has spoiled the show. It isn't the children's show any more when the parents have taken over. Yet all the time the children want help. If the play requires Daddy to be a lion, they want him to be a lion. If there is no purple paint for a picture that requires purple paint, they must have purple paint. A crown for a king and a top hat for a president must be found or borrowed or made. So the secret the adult needs to learn is to let the child ask for help, not to offer help unasked. The child who asks for help feels strong and confident. He is just getting a little assistance on the side or calling in someone to admire his work. Given help that he doesn't want, the child feels cramped and

fenced in. The child who brings you his picture or asks you to come while he gives a play is free and creative.

Then there is always the question of which of the things a child is doing he wants to share, and with whom. An only child may have a lot of things he wants to do by himself or with an imaginary playmate or with his toys or pets. Brothers and sisters have plots and special plays that they like to do together, without their parents. Neighboring children with a good place to play—a big backyard, a garage, an attic, a basement room—may invent all kinds of "secret" games. Parents have to keep an eye on these games to be sure that they are not dangerous or destructive, that the house doesn't get set on fire, that no one is locked in a closet, that the carefully piled week's washing isn't toppled onto the floor. But time of one's own—a life not shared with anyone all the time—is essential for the creative life.

It is really quite easy to see why all creators—children and grownups—need privacy as well as an appreciative audience. Privacy is needed for practicing, trying things out, rehearsing, trying to get the painting or the story or the new performance right. This is the time when the child has to be free to experiment by himself. When he is older, he needs to be able to shut the door of his room and hang a sign outside, "Keep Out" or "Men at Work." When two children share a room, each should have some time to himself. Children need this kind of privacy even when they are not doing anything that seems a bit creative—when they are growing or just wondering about what they have learned.

Children need a place to be alone in. It does not have to be a room. It can be a corner on the stairs:

Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair
Where I sit.
There isn't any
Other stair
Quite like
It.

It can be up a tree or behind the curtains or back of the TV set or just standing in the corner of the yard. A child needs a place to sit or stand or lie, to be awake or asleep as he pleases, to think over life.

Children need a place to make things, especially the things that take up space and the things they want to work on for a long time—a row of dolls, for instance, who have to stay in school all day. Even in a very small house, some place can be found where the things laid out for a play can be left undisturbed. But the best place, of course, is one with a door that will shut and that is used just for play. Country children have old woodsheds and hay mows to play in. City children sometimes have to pretend that a narrow double-decker bed is an apple tree or an Indian canoe or a barn or a spaceship.

So many children's plays begin with "Let's pretend." This word, ***pretend,*** is one of the most useful words we have in making a creative life for children. Making things—

pictures, stories, plays—and coming to understand things by playing with them are ways of learning to know the difference between what is "real" and what is "pretend." The baby playing peekaboo doesn't cry when his mother covers her face—though he might if she went out of the room. In the real world everyone, children and grownups alike, has to come to grips with real things that cannot be changed. A chair is a chair, not a chariot or a jet plane. And only after you have learned that it *is* a chair, meant to be sat on, can you fully enjoy pretending "it's a jet plane." A child who is afraid of goblins or bears under the stairs or things that go bump in the night does not yet have the freedom to enjoy pretending that there are goblins in the closet or bears under the bed.

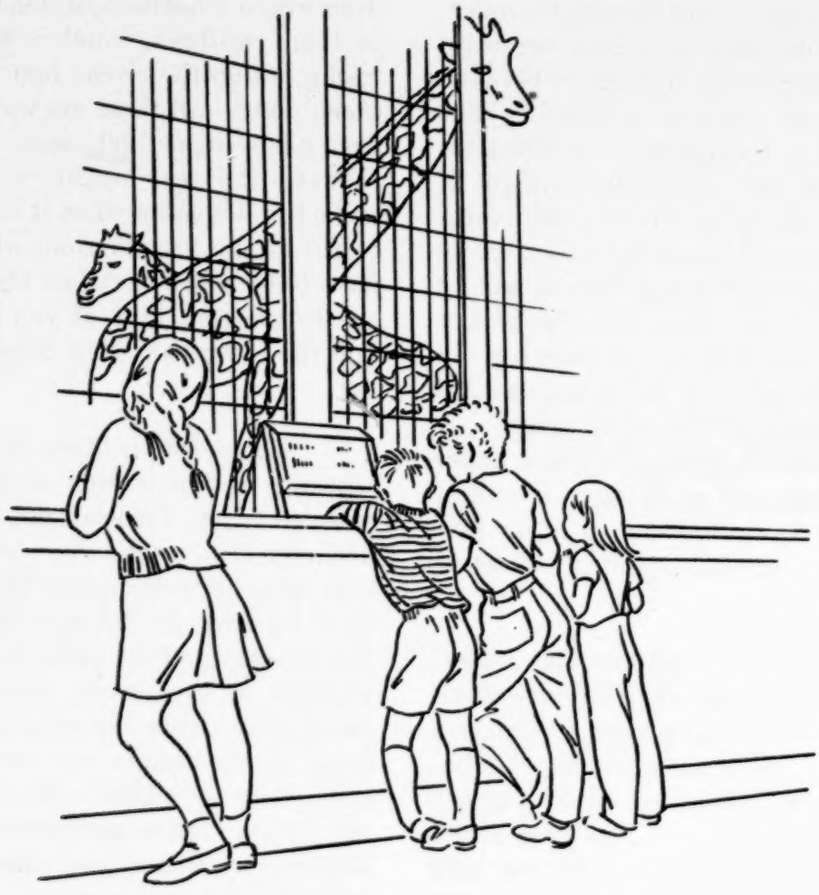
Later, the older child and the adolescent will be able to try out adult roles, to think about what it would be like to be a pilot or a nurse, a dancer, a mountain climber, a Congressman, without getting confused between fact and daydreaming. In America, Santa Claus is one of the ways we have for teaching children a little at a time about what is real and what is pretend. American children are meant to start out by believing in Santa Claus and then to come to find out about him, not as a big shock and a disappointment, but gradually by learning to enjoy all the trouble Daddy or Uncle Jim or Grandpa or the school principal had to go to in order to "be" Santa Claus. This whole process of believing, then beginning to suspect, and finally recognizing Father's shoes for sure helps to keep a balance between the things that are real and the things that man, as an artist and a playwright, a storyteller, has devised throughout the ages to enrich life for children and adults alike.

Some people all their lives keep an interest in "seeing behind the scenes." Today some radio stations broadcast orchestra rehearsals so the listeners can hear musicians and the conductor trying and then trying again to turn their playing into music. Letting children watch rehearsals, watch the actors trying on their costumes, watch a dog learning new tricks, watch the circus tent being put up or taken down—all these are ways in which children can sharpen their sense of the difference between the real world, where you cannot make the sun shine when it is raining, and the world of the imagination, where men do not have to be white or red or black or yellow but can be green or blue, if you like, and the sun and the moon can shine brightly in the same sky.

Later, for children of 10 and 12, there will be a different kind of going-behind-the-scene to enjoy, for example, the preparations department in a museum where skilled craftsmen take the "color notes" brought back by an explorer from an African jungle or from up the Amazon and the skins of real animals, the feathers of real birds, and build a habitat group to re-create for visitors to the museum a sense of the jungle and its creatures. And when they are a little older still, they may go on visits to marine laboratories or to industrial laboratories where new plastics are made to watch work in progress.

It is also important for understanding real worlds and pretend worlds to find ways of giving the child a sense of a whole world. A farm is one kind of whole world. On a farm there are chickens and cows, the food is growing for the cows to eat, and the manure is put back to renew the strength of the land. Chickens lay eggs, and lambs and calves are born to drink their mothers' milk, and the hay and grain are taken into the barn or are stacked up in the fields for the cows to eat later. People take care of the cattle and their own children, and the children learn to feed the chickens and pick cherries from the trees or pick up apples that fall to the ground. Year after year the cycle is repeated, giving a feeling for the continuity of life.

Another way to learn about a whole real world is for a country child to go to a city and



see where things are made. He can visit a press where a newspaper is printed, a studio from which TV programs come, a factory where automobiles are made, a great reservoir where water is stored for a million people, the zoo which is the only place where a city child sees animals (but he does see kinds of animals a country child never sees), the great fire engines that protect the houses so crowded together that there is always danger of fire, the ambulance whose siren opens a path through the streams of cars and buses so that one sick person can be taken quickly to a hospital, the mounted police who hold back crowds at a big parade, the great ocean liners and freighters from far away ports, the railroad yards with freight cars from all over the country, the airports with planes coming and going from every part of the world.

A third way to see a whole world is to go to a village, a very small village, where one can see all together the parts of life that cannot be seen in the countryside and that are big and far apart in a large city. In a village one walk will take one to the post office, the bank, the grocery store, the hardware store, the school, the church and the churchyard, the town hall. For both city and country children, a village is a different kind of world from which they can learn to see how the life of the community works. Today there are also the re-created communities of the past—Williamsburg, Virginia; New Salem, Illinois; Green-

field Village in Dearborn, Michigan; Central City, Colorado—where seeing a whole way of life, even without all the people who once lived there, can make history more vivid and today's living communities more real by contrast.

There are other ways, too, of seeing whole ways of life. In our great national parks, children can see a way of life of which man is not really a part, where beavers and bears and deer, tiny wood mice, blue jays and woodpeckers, wild bees making wild honey, dragonflies floating over the water, and fish leaping high out of the brook in the sunlight, have a life of their own. Here one gets a feeling for the childhood of the world when man had not journeyed all over it and the living creatures had half-continents to themselves.

Or children can go to the seashore and learn about the life that is related to the sea. They can watch the fishermen mending their nets and traps, setting out before dawn, returning happy or in despair, depending on the size of the catch. The children can gather sea shells which go back millions of years, watch the horseshoe crabs back into each other with their armored tails, wade in the shallows, feel the sand between their toes, and for a little while feel as if they, too, were water creatures. When their vacation is over, they can visit an aquarium and see fish from other parts of the ocean world. And they can go to a museum and look at models of what life is like at the bottom of the deep sea. Later, when they are older, they can extend their explorations in a boat or by diving far below the surface. Deep under water, they can feel the weightlessness that the spaceman feels as well as something quite different from the emptiness of outer space, the delicate pressure of thousands of little, live creatures against their skin.

Children can also experience another world by going to see how a different people live. Families who live near the Mexican border can actually cross over into Mexico and walk through a Mexican village, listening to the different language, smelling strange new smells, watching the bright colors. Those who live in the north can cross into Canada and visit a French Canadian village, for a few hours entering a different world. Even in the middle of the United States if you look hard, you can usually find colonies and pockets of people who have come from another country and still keep the ways and language of the country from which they came. Seeing another world of this kind will bring to life the programs about strange countries on TV and in the movies.

As children begin to read—the fairy tales that girls enjoy or the tales of adventure that boys sometimes like better—their memories will be stored with pictures which will enliven the descriptions in words of other times and other places. Children who have learned all they know about other places from the flat TV or movie screen, who have not walked about, sat down, sniffed, tasted, shivered or boiled in places different from their own neighborhood, sometimes don't have enough stored in their imagination to enjoy anything without illustrations. So they may get stuck, sitting for hours by the TV or reading comic books instead of going on to the kind of reading in which they themselves have to fill in pictures to match the words:

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark . . .

The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam
And the rocking pines of the forest roared,—
This was their welcome home.

I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills . . .

Above the town the hills close in, cushioned with deep oak woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate; below they

lower, and open more and more in softly-rounded knolls, and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt marshes, and rolling sand-hills. . . .

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink . . .

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel, and, looking up, I found the moon had risen, and was silvering the mizzen-top and shining white on the luff of the fore-sail; and almost at the same time the voice of the look-out shouted "Land ho!"

Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet ground in her life; it was all ridges and furrows; the croquet balls were live hedgehogs, and the mallets live flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches.

Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky . . .

Then I felt like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet sweeps into his ken . . .

On journeys away from home to see another real world, the child gets something else. He gets new eyes to see home with, and from each kind of journey, he gets a different way of seeing home. Coming home to the country, he appreciates a new sense of space to run and play; in the city he enjoys the jolly bustle; or he feels a new comfortable sense of knowing everyone in the village; after the wilderness he can take a new pleasure in the houses men have built to keep people warm and safe; coming back from abroad he can have a new feeling that our own language, our mother tongue, is after all just the way we talk while other peoples speak other languages and these are their mother tongues. Each journey away from home increases a child's appreciation of his own home and gives him a new sense of how he lives and how other peoples live.

An aquarium is another form in which a whole world can be brought to children. No matter how tiny, an aquarium is a "whole world" with its own need for light and darkness, its own balance between air and water, plant life and fish. Following the cycle of life in an aquarium, the child can learn to stand ***outside*** a world, an experience that will be repeated as the child holds a globe or visits a planetarium or follows an astronaut's journey into space. For the children who will be adults in the 21st century, a feeling about space and the place of our planet in space will be essential to a sense of being at home in the universe. Standing beside an aquarium, watching fish moving, they can get the feeling of being both inside and outside, can understand how encased we are in our own planet's atmosphere and how vast the space is outside.

Many young children will enjoy making miniature worlds of their own. These can be miniatures of the worlds they have seen on visits. One child may want to make a farm, another a railroad yard, a third a forest full of wild creatures with Bambi there in the center, a fourth a gathering of dolls dressed in the clothes of many different peoples. Some children will want to make these themselves from clay and blocks, sticks and stones and sand. Others may enjoy collecting tiny toys and arranging them with looking glasses for lakes and carrot tops for trees. A very good world can be made with a tray of sand into which sticks and leaves can be stuck, which the child can form into hills and valleys or sweep as smooth as the great plains and can change whenever he gets a new idea.

These play worlds of small children shade by all degrees into what older children do with their own rooms, with the models they build, with the personalities they try on for fit. Girls are more likely to try to make their rooms into expressions of themselves, exten-

sions of the makeup and clothes they wear. They need experience of the ways in which, in other times and places, homes were designed or kitchens were arranged, of the costumes people wore and how they moved in them. These experiences will give them the sense of flexibility they will need later, when they have to turn a tiny apartment, an isolated house, a camping cabin or a trailer into a distinctive home which not only expresses themselves but also forms a backdrop for their particular family and friends. They need to be drawn out, to go beyond turning the world into a setting just for themselves.

In contrast, boys need to see the particular thing they are interested in—cars and trains, baseball scores, rabbits, rockets, chess—as part of a larger whole. This is the time when small groups of boys of about the same age begin to form friendship clusters, and one boy's interest in raising hamsters and another's interest in making a mineral collection can be combined in a newspaper which reports on the birth of hamsters, the location of a new sample of garnets, and the batting averages of big league baseball players. Boys repeat things more than girls do. As little children they ask for the same story night after night, or they want to add more and more small cars or trains or planes to their collections. Later, they listen for more hours on the radio or TV to more of the same kinds of games. Sometimes they seem to be stuck in some activity like a needle in the groove of a scratched phonograph record—and sometimes they are stuck. But sometimes they are just experimenting, over and over again, with all the different ways in which boys have to learn how to manage things, how to develop strength and acquire skill, how to play by the rules of the game.

Another part of human experience in which men recognize creativeness is in religion and philosophy, the visions of the universe and of man's relationship to God and to his fellow men. Through the ages, prophets and saints have given ordinary men new words, new ways of appreciating the grandeur of the universe and the significance of human life. Like the great scientist or the great artist or poet, the great religious philosopher is very rare. Children need the kind of experience that will make religion and philosophy meaningful to them when they are grown so that the words of a prophet or the life of a saint may find an answering echo in their minds and hearts This means that every child should have some chance to hear the beautiful words, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" and "I will

praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." And every child needs to experience what religion and philosophy mean to those for whom they are a major part of life. Though parents themselves may have no religious ties, they will have relatives or know of neighbors to whom ritual and prayer are important. And if parents themselves have never found that being alone under the stars at night has given a new feeling to their lives, there are others who have learned to feel:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky . . .

Just as every child, as he grows, has a readiness for the questions and discoveries that lie back of science and for the experience of making something with sound or words, with clay or paint, so also every child has a readiness to feel the mystery of the universe. When a desire for some deeper relationship comes years later to the adolescent or the adult, he who as a child has had an opportunity to feel such a relationship will find something on which to build. The child's sense of delight in drawing or painting or modeling can best be linked to a future delight in art if the child also sees at least single examples of great paintings or great sculpture. So, too, the child's experience with great religious traditions in groups, as people stand or kneel, sing or read aloud words which millions have shared, will give him a basic understanding, which will grow with his own growth, of what is meant by religion. And as background for future spiritual development, the child needs close human contact with some adult to whom the things of the spirit mean a great deal. Some parents may feel very humble and have a sense that they can express little of the marvels of the universe. But somewhere nearby there are books and, today, radio and TV. Somewhere within reach there are individuals to whom the religious aspect of life is the most significant one. Somewhere within reach there are individuals who love to stand beneath the stars or ponder on the way in which a flower is fearfully and wonderfully made. Here as in every other respect, parents today can meet the child's needs and potentialities, if they realize what these are. TV has brought the age-old beauty of religious ritual so close to the eye that the viewer sees something never seen by the congregations of the past who were crowded far back from the center of the service. TV and radio can bring poetry and philosophy into the home. Now a child can sit, safe and warm in his mother's arms, listening to words, watching a look on a great man's face which will stay with him for years.

We come now to another kind of creativeness, which in adults we find in statesmen who have built or saved their countries and in men and women who have had some vision of human welfare which has changed the lives of millions—which has freed slaves, has made it possible for children to live, has given women dignity, has brought a realization that all men belong to one great human race. We say that any boy can be President. But we have not fully worked out the ties between the lives of children and adolescents and the great advances in political and social life which we associate with names like Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and Jane Addams. In the past we depended on school books—readers which told stories about great men, histories which provided quotations such as "government of the people, by the people, and for the people"—and occasions on which our great heroes were honored and our memory of their lives was quickened. So a figure like Abraham Lincoln vies with another like George Washington as small children argue which man was the greater: "But Washington must be the biggest because he was the father of his country." Generations of American children learn to include the heroes of the American tradition in their thinking, and as

they grow older and learn something about European and world history, they add other names.

As adolescents, they will have heroes to look back to, to think about again. One of the ways in which adolescents can keep a vision of greatness and yet accept the fact that their own parents are, in many ways, not the intellectual and moral giants they seemed to them as small children is to turn again to the heroes whose legends they have known since childhood: King Arthur, William Tell, Horatius at the bridge, Washington at Valley Forge, Jason and the Golden Fleece, the boy who kept back the floods with his finger in the dike, Daniel Boone, Robert Peary. . . .

Children also need the experience of social responsibility so that someday some of them may become great statesmen and leaders while others, as lawyers, members of school boards, town planners, and voters, will be able to carry out the great designs, and all of them will be able to feel that living in a democratic society requires taking part and paying attention. They need to know older people who take their civic responsibilities seriously, who worry about slippery banana peels on the pavement, rickety school buildings, corruption in the police force, traffic violations, and who are willing to give their time to ring doorbells, to act as watchers at the polls, to work as volunteer firemen, to accept jury duty.

One of the great dangers which we face today is the individual's feeling that he is not significant. The world is so big, so many thousands of people are involved even in a small thing like a single big league baseball game, so many hundreds of people are involved in any one national decision, that it is easy to feel that any one person doesn't count. But children who grow up to feel that an impenetrable wall separates them from the decisions taken in the town hall, at the city hall, at the State capital, in Congress, and in the White House, will be no more than lifeless citizens, bored, cynical, and unable to take part in the political life of their country.

Yet it is possible to forge a series of links between the life of the small child and the freedom and dignity of the adult. A first step is to treat the child as a separate, full, responsible person with the right to make some of his own decisions. This can begin as parents recognize that a child is hungry or has had enough to eat, that he is wakeful or sleepy, that he can choose a game to play or is tired of a game. It goes on in a recognition of the child's right to his own toys, his own place at the table. And very soon these privileges, which can be given even to a tiny infant, can be combined with duties. The child can learn to wait until mother is ready, to be quiet while father is talking or while his brother is watching the ball game or his sister is telephoning; he can learn to keep food on his own plate, not to throw food on the floor. One reason why the family is the best training ground we know of for responsible citizenship is that a family is made up of people of both sexes, of different ages, with different needs and different duties. Within the family, the child is not just one among many. Later, he will learn to be one in a marching group of second graders who must get safely across the street, one adolescent on a class trip to Washington, one voter standing in line at the polling place. But in the family, each person, even one of a pair of twins, has individuality. There are things a particular child is too small to do, too little to reach. There are times when he has a right to be fed first, to be considered first. As he grows, there are things that only he can do. Jimmy is the one who always remembers where we put away the sand toys, what mother did with her glasses, what we ate on our last picnic. But it is Sue who remembers what time the TV program goes on and on which day the parade will be held. Daily tasks, too, can be divided up as one child takes in the paper, feeds the cat, empties the ashtrays, turns the TV knob for the program everyone wants to hear, and another smooths the pillows, straightens the

towels, sets the table, sees that messages get put where they will be read.

Right within the family, a child can learn the basic feeling for a democratic society—that every individual has dignity and matters, that what each person does is necessary, that what each person does is different and cannot so easily be done by someone else. The child who rushes home because it is *his* job to walk the dog or feed the cat or to shut the windows when a storm is coming up will learn deeply and for all time that what he does matters. He will not say, "Aw, what does one vote matter among millions?" He will not think, "Let George do it." He will be pretty sure that no one else can do as well what he can do.

Children differ, of course, in the kind and the amount of responsibility they can take. In the past, many children were given too much responsibility too soon. At 8 or 10 years of age, boys were sent out to work and girls were put in complete charge of younger children. We know now that before children are weighed down with adult tasks, they need a longer time to grow and learn about the world. And many people feel that children living in towns and cities have no chance to do responsible things as children living on farms do—bring in the wood, feed the chickens, pick the peas, harness the horse. But today, farm life and life in suburbs and towns and cities are becoming more alike. On a modern farm, small boys and girls cannot handle the complicated machinery that has replaced the horse. In a modern city home, there are many tasks boys and girls can perform. Answering the telephone and the doorbell, shopping in a supermarket are just as useful activities as are feeding the chickens and bringing in the cows. The important thing is that the child is asked to do something that actually needs to be done and that is within the limits of his skills. Letting a child do something important badly—answer the telephone before he can write down the message correctly—does not lead to responsibility later. Neither does giving the child an unnecessary, invented task. But a too complicated task can be broken down so the child can manage it; the child who

cannot yet take a message still can call the correct adult to the telephone. The task where only "intention" counts—where the results don't matter—is a fake and the child knows it is.

It is faking also to ask children's opinions or to let them seem to make a choice when the adults have already made up their minds. When a child is asked what he prefers, the adult must be ready and willing to act on the child's decision. When mother asks, "Would you like to go to the beach?" she must be prepared to stay at home if the child answers, "No." If she has already decided that it is a good idea to go to the beach, she will do better to say quietly, "We are going to the beach now." In this way she lays a basis for later citizenship. In the future there will be many things that someone else has already decided—traffic rules, sanitation rules, the way taxes are to be paid. As a voter the adult can work to change things, but meanwhile he has to follow the rules without argument. Pretending to a child that he is being consulted and then going ahead with what one meant to do anyway only confuses the child about the way life is organized. But giving a child no chance to have an opinion, no chance to make choices that will be respected is equally poor preparation for leading and initiating or cooperating in later life.

Children will have so many new things to learn as they grow older that it is worthwhile to lay as good a foundation as possible for this later learning. True, the early years are different from the later ones in certain ways. The child's early learnings are extremely important because he has lived such a short time and is growing so fast and learning so much—to be himself, to walk, to talk, to eat and sleep and manage his own body, to feel at home in the world. Severe deprivations, the loss of a parent, a year spent with one leg in a cast, a change from one home to another, a really bad and frightening experience—all these leave strong marks and may need special help to overcome. And really good experiences, having parents who feel what a child is feeling and keep pace with his growth, also make very strong impressions that may last through life and protect the individual from the most terrible experiences in the future. After World War II, a doctor adopted two sick and damaged children from the Nazi concentration camp at Belsen and finally nursed and won them back to health and trust. Later, he made a special trip back to the Carpathian Mountains where they had been born to find out what had happened to them in their early childhood that had given them the strength to survive and get well again. In the mountain village, he found their old grandmother who could tell him how the little girl's mother had comforted her lovingly when her cat was killed; and so, step by step, he followed the building up of strength in these well-loved children. From medicine and psychology, we have learned how badly damaged children can be. Not enough emphasis has been put on the ways in which children can also be made especially strong.

It is these early years that lay the foundation of the future when, in an atmosphere of love and acceptance as an important member of a family, a child learns to wonder and to ask, to trace designs in the sand, to name the stars, to feel awe in the world.

IV. As the Child's Life Widens

SO FAR we have been discussing the child's life before he goes to school with only occasional glimpses at later years. Yet after school has begun, there are twice as many years before the end of high school, and for many young Americans 2 or 4 or 6 years of technical training or of college and university while the student still lives at home at least part of the time. A creative life does not stop with the end of early childhood, nor do the things a parent can do for a child stop when the child enters school.

But only in early childhood are the parents a principal influence in the child's life. And even then the outer world begins to enter the home, first with radio and then with TV. Parents can select for the child but they can only select from what is there, that day, on the channels that have programs. This is one reason why books and records are better than TV or radio, for they give the parents a wider choice in what the child will look at or hear. But whether they make up the stories themselves, bring the books home from the chainstore or the bookstore or the library, or decide which TV programs the child is to watch, the parents are in charge of the little child's world. When grandparents live nearby, they, too, may contribute a great deal. And as the family grows, older brothers and sisters form part of the small child's world, but usually they have been brought up by the same parents.

When children enter school, parents lose the freedom to shape their imaginations, to feed their bodies and minds and spirits on the best fare they themselves know. The kind of school they attend, who the teacher is, what the other children have been reading and watching and talking about—all these things come from outside the home. Parents may try in various ways to control these new influences on their children. They may move to a neighborhood where there is a better school or where they think the other children will come from congenial homes in which their questions will have been answered in similar ways. But even for the parents who are free to move, to find a neighborhood and a school closer to their own hearts, part of the responsibility for their children has passed outside the home. Their children will often care more about what the other children do and about what the teacher thinks than about what their parents want them to do. This move outside the home is a normal and necessary one for the child. Part of the parents' task is to let the child go, realizing that others must now continue the task. The neighborhood, the school, their playmates now also provide children with the experience of what games are, what is the difference between pretend and real, how to think about boys and girls and grownups, good and bad, the future and the past.

Parents of a little child can arrange the setting so that the child finds the situations within which he can discover and learn and experiment. But now, for older children, the whole neighborhood becomes the setting. Every orchard, every pond on which ice forms

in winter, every playground and backyard, the library and the museum, rumpus rooms and attics on rainy days, the candy store and the skating rink, the local movie houses, bicycle paths, swimming pools and basketball courts, baseball diamonds and streets where ball is played—all these now replace the home environment. When the small child ventured away from the home environment, he went with a trusted adult. School-age children begin to move in groups. Adults still are needed but at a greater distance, and the children need more space in which to roam, space for the boys to play ball and for the girls to sit, at first still playing dolls, or to jump rope or play hopscotch, for boys or girls to play jacks and mumblety peg. The tremendous interest that grade school children take in one another, in measuring skills and preserving the boundaries between one age group and another, often means that there is less emphasis on imaginative activities and more on physical activities, on games, on gathering together even without an aim. What the children do—whether they give plays to raise money for a cancer drive, "publish" a newspaper, or inaugurate ways of making money for the Cub Scouts or the Brownies—will depend partly on the resources of the neighborhood—whether someone has a typewriter on which to type the newspaper, whether a mother will welcome six girls into her kitchen to make cookies—and partly on accidents of leadership among the children themselves. What they do will depend also on the kinds of activities that are organized around the school, the library, the playground.

Almost all parents will disapprove of some things in the world into which their

children are moving; these may be streets which are dangerous to cross, groups of adolescents of whose activities they are critical, favorite haunts where the atmosphere seems unwholesome, a movie where the films shown on Saturday mornings are not the ones they want their children to see. Some of these things can be changed. Parents can work for more playgrounds, or take groups of children to the country, or lead a Scout group. But part of the outside world will be beyond parental control, and parents have the new task of interpreting to children what goes on outside. TV programs are part of this outside world. Watching the violence on TV by himself may deform the child's imagination; seeing the same programs with older people who can explain what is real and what is fiction, children may take delight in cowboy films and space opera and still be protected against the effects of crimes that look too much like real life for comfort.

There will be long periods, too, when what the child brings home seems very out of touch with what the little child learned. Sometimes it will be much more interesting. The mother who had a poor schooling may delight in the songs the child brings home from school. The father may enjoy his son's beginning interest in scientific experiments that already go far beyond his own knowledge. But often it will be shocking, as children from other kinds of homes challenge some dearly loved article of religious faith or teach the child words that are considered inappropriate or bad. When these things happen, every family has a tendency to draw into itself. Less educated parents may react against the child's studying things they themselves do not know about. Strict parents may react against what seems to them moral and religious laxity. Or parents may think that their own manners, wherever they learned them, are the best in the world.

In a neighborhood in which there are people of different backgrounds, people who differ in skin color and in religious faith, the attempt to keep children what they were and to protect them from what they are becoming may take the form of hostility to one or another of the various groups. In attempting to keep a child clean who now never washes his face, to keep a child "talking right" who now uses all sorts of strange phrases, to keep a child truthful who now brings home one tall tale after another, parents may use what seems to be a very simple device to control and protect their child from contamination. Taking some other group as an example, they urge their child not to behave like those X's or Y's or Z's, who are "dirty" or "vulgar" or "stuck up" or "bad."

The method often seems to work. If a child's parents say that the X's or Y's or Z's are something they reject—even more if the parents of all his own playmates reject them—then the child who is being scolded will not want to be like them. Sometimes quite miraculous results are obtained. Faces are washed or words disappear from the children's vocabulary because none of them want to talk "like an X." But an irreparable harm has been done to the children. They will have lost their ability to belong to the whole human race. Each of them will have lost his full individual dignity as a human being. They will have learned to associate all the people who can be described as being X with something undesirable or low or evil. Never again will any one of them be able to look some fellow man in the eye without, at best, embarrassment and, at worst, fear and hatred. Each child will also have learned something else—that *any* group of people may be loved or hated, respected or despised, not as individuals but merely because of the color of their skin or the way they worship their God. And all of them will have learned that they themselves are just members of a group valuable not as individuals, each a full person in his and her own right, but merely collectively because of their sex, their accent, their manners, the size or the location of their homes.

If our children are to grow up with a sense of their own dignity, they must learn to think of all other people as individuals with dignity, not simply as members of groups who have in common certain physical characteristics like color or kind of hair, or the same religious customs or ways of speaking or dressing, who live in the same kinds of houses, drive the same kinds of cars.

This sense that each person is an individual begins at home as children learn, from the way in which they are treated, not that being a boy or a girl but that being Jimmy or Susan is the most important thing. It continues when children go outside of their own home and begin to compare the ways of their own family with the ways of other families, if parents can then explain, "Our family does things this way, other families do things differently," or "Some parents are more particular than others about what their children do," or "Other people enjoy food which you think smells too strong." Parents who can feel and explain in this way not only are increasing the children's fitness for living in a democracy but also are giving them a new freedom. For if families can be different, if different families can live differently, eat differently, feel differently, then children, too, can be different and need not be completely bound to the food and the feelings of their own family. Instead they can be free to explore.

This is something which worries many parents. They need to realize that in any case children will explore, will go off with friends of their own age, try out other children's ideas, follow the lead of the gang. The question that matters is not: Will they go away a little from home? They will. The important question is: How will they go? Will they go with a firm sense of a home base to which they can return? Or with a sense of guilt and anger, often to end up in secret mischief? In today's crowded living conditions, with so many things that can easily be damaged, mischief turns very quickly into acts that are classified as juvenile delinquency.

One way parents can influence what happens during this elementary period of childhood is to keep wide open the doors between the child's life at home, in the neighborhood, and on the street, and at school. This means knowing the children your children play with. It means having a chance to guard against real dangers and to set up play situations according to your preferences for your children. Treated as an outside and alien group, their companions will take them away from you or else frighten them back to your arms where they no longer belong. But children will drift happily enough into the home where children are welcomed with a smile, a cookie, and permission to play. This means, of course, sharing with other children the things you have built up for your own children. The scissors and paste, the clay, the records, the sandpile and the swing, the backyard swimming pool will now belong to more children as they will come to share the world you have worked out for your children. This is what one kind of parents can do, parents who have time and space and who enjoy children. Keeping the doors open is one way also of looking ahead to adolescence, when young people are shyer about bringing home their friends. But if their friends have always been welcome, they may continue to take this kind of hospitality for granted.

But many parents do not have the time or the space or the patience to make their homes or apartments or garages into play centers for children. Their children will go to other people's houses or they will play in the street if there is nowhere else to go. They will read the books which other children read; if the books are smutty, they will secretly enjoy them. They may get into gangs who start with mischief and end with stealing and a court record. Under these circumstances, what can parents do who cannot make their own homes places for safe play and steady

growth? The most common American answer has been to move. The second most common answer has been to try to keep out or push out other groups or individuals who seem less fortunate or less desirable. Neither method has worked out very well. We are coming to realize that, in the end, running away from social conditions instead of trying to alter them has spread juvenile delinquency over the whole country. Today, unless the citizens of a neighborhood are willing to take some common responsibility for their children—for the streets they walk on and the buses they ride on, for the places where they play, for the books they read and the movies they see, for their attitudes toward the police and the way the police treat them, for the school they go to and the children's behavior toward the school—no child, however well brought up, will be safe in that neighborhood. A creative life for a child of 6 or 8 or 10, a life which leads to freedom and dignity, means making a neighborhood in which such a life is possible. This can no longer be accomplished by single families. Even the 6-year-old girl belongs to a wider world than home.

Indeed, the greatest individual creativity of late childhood lies in the discovery of the wider world: what it looks like, feels like, what one can do in it and with it. When adolescence comes, boys and girls will again be preoccupied with questions about themselves and their own bodies, about who they are and what they will become. But during the years of childhood, they are free—as they were not as little children and as they will no longer be as adolescents—to explore in every direction, to wonder, to ask questions, to try things out, to experiment with skills and strength. And children will do things on their own if adults establish safe pathways for them, which end in a park or a wood, a museum, a fair, a hill to climb, a cave to explore. The children will establish their own groups. The boys will decide which girls are enough like boys to go along with them. The girls who wish to remain close to home and domesticity will set their own limits, already turning their eyes toward older boys, trying to be more grown up than they are. Given enough to think about and do, both boys and girls will be content to prolong this precious period when their curiosity is so fresh, their minds are so clear and untroubled.

Children of this age need time to be alone and places where they will be undisturbed and can do things by themselves--read or make things or perhaps begin diary keeping—and where they can simply lie flat and do nothing. Children need time to grow. Growing pains are real and a hint to child and parent that the child needs rest. If children are allowed to have time just to sit in the backyard or lie staring at the ceiling, then later, when the overwhelming periods of "laziness" of adolescence come, everyone in the family will be used to Jimmy's preference for a particular corner and Jimmy, used to sitting there, may be able to estimate how far his long legs are now stretching into the middle of the room.

Before adolescence begins, parents need to help children to establish the conditions within which they will later be able to move away out into the world and on into the future. The steps can be set up carefully during childhood: "Yes, you can take your lunches and bicycle out to the ball park if you go with Billy"—for Billy has already made the trip and knows the way. "Yes, if you and Ruth go together, you may go to the movies." Then when the adolescent wants to do things, the pattern will be established of going with someone who has gone there before, of sharing an experience with one or two friends, of being trusted to be sensible and not get into trouble; and eventually adolescents will trust themselves to go across the continent, or go to Europe, or take a job far away from home. The limits of trust, and so the limits of self-confidence, are still dependent on home. Schools may strictly supervise school time; but there are still weekends and holidays when children

are free and must learn how to enjoy their freedom. Step by step, they learn how to move further from their home base, finding the way, taking companions who know, looking up their destination on a map, packing their own rucksacks, learning to eat when they are hungry, learning not to get overtired, learning how to be resourceful, how to avoid emergencies and how to meet them when they occur. These are the essential lessons of late childhood, while children are exploring in space and before they venture into a future which will be more theirs than ours, so that the parent can say:

You must be free to take a path
Whose end I have no need to know.

V. With Adolescence the World Grows Even Wider

IN LATER CHILDHOOD, although children do venture away, they still are tied to their home and are completely dependent on the support and trust they find at home even in their attempts to defy it. But a new crisis occurs as the adolescent asks for—or rejects—the help of the home in leaving it. As an individual and as a member of a clique or group much wider than the neighborhood group of children, the adolescent will question every value and every taste learned in childhood. An early childhood learning that was full and rich will be revivified as the adolescent struggles with the problems of good and evil, life and work, with the question of what to be and who to be. And the adolescent will again live through many of the experiences of early childhood, wondering and questioning and attempting to make something out of the new spurt of growth and the changes going on inside the body. Much of the clear-eyed assurance of the active, confident child will seem to be disappearing. The interest in the outside world—in things and in how things work—which was a major interest in late childhood may now be used as a screen which the young adolescent sets between himself and his developing impulses, between himself and his companions.

Once more the process of growth supplies a sense of creation. The skinny little boy and girl are becoming a man and a woman, capable not only of becoming adults but adults who can produce their kind and who can do all the things adults have done throughout time and new things as well—traveling the seas, exploring space, building bridges and roads and houses, sailing boats, planting gardens, getting jobs, writing books. The sense of a maturing body and a maturing mind and the sense of the openness of the future give a special quality to adolescence. The boy and the girl try to hold on to the past, to the memory of the sureness of their arms and legs last year, when they were exploring, venturing further out into a world *that was, a solid, real world. But the adolescent's* world is not yet solid and real. In fact, the world may change its shape altogether because of one adolescent's choice—the decision to become an engineer, a nurse, a pilot, a sheep farmer in Australia, to go to Alaska, to study Sanskrit, to become a fireman, to go to the moon. Each choice is fateful both for the adolescent and for the world. "How do you know who I am," a 15-year-old girl asked her mother, who was sneering at her daydreams. "How do you know what I might be? For all you know, I ***might*** someday be a great actress!" The choice of becoming a fireman may involve saving the lives of crucial people; the choice of becoming a pilot may mean piloting ***the*** plane on whose fate the fate of nations hangs. Nothing is as yet decided, and the whole process of decision

is momentous. Asked what he was thinking about, a 12-year-old boy, already as tall as a man, replied dreamily, "I think of the past and all the things I've done and all the things I could do, who I'm going to marry and where I'm going to live." In each such reverie, a whole world is created, a whole series of possible worlds come into being. The sheep farm will be a very different sheep farm if Jim decides to be a sheep farmer. The whole future of Alaska may depend on his presence if Pete is elected governor. Hundreds of mothers and babies will come safely through life if Susan decides to be a nurse. The secret of a space drive will be solved if Bill becomes an engineer.

As the little child needed materials to make a world, sand and clay and sticks and stones, the adolescent needs new kinds of materials to fill in all the gaps in these possible worlds, among which he or she must choose. When a boy thinks about going somewhere—west or north or to help develop Antarctica—he needs to know what life is like there, what it looks like, who went there before him, what the chances are for him to show his skill and endurance under stress, what in the nature of heroism in the past can provide him with a *model for his heroism in the future.* When a girl dreams of becoming a nurse or a caseworker, she needs to know what a hospital is like, what it means to climb five flights of stairs in a slum tenement, why Florence Nightingale has become a symbol of the nurse who knows no distinctions among those who need her care, why Jane Addams was called "the angel of the city streets." A boy who is dreaming of climbing a mountain whose heights have never yet been scaled needs books and films and personal contact with mountain climbers who understand what it was like to climb Mount Everest or Mount McKinley or the Aconcagua.

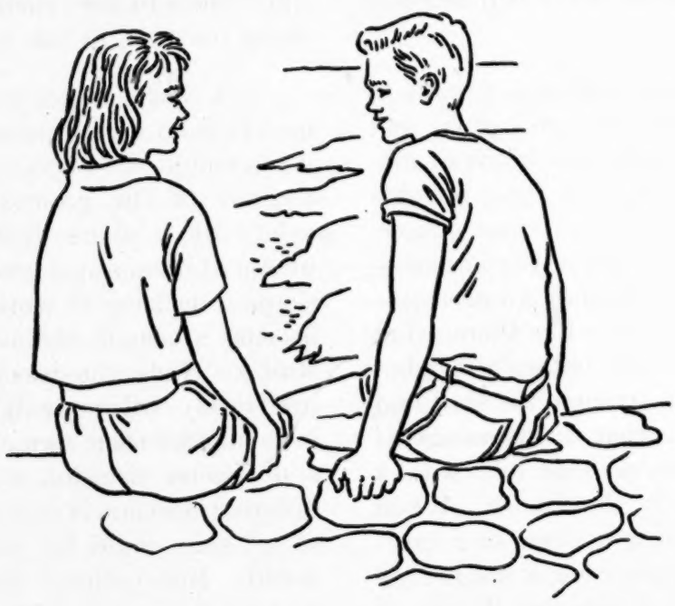
Adolescents also need different kinds of experience to open their eyes to possibilities which do not lie directly before them. They need to discover how very wide the range of choice really is. Country-bred boys and girls need to visit cities; city-bred, they need to see the country and the wilderness. From inland they should go to the sea; from the narrow coastlines into the heart of the country. They should cross the boundaries of familiar social and economic groups, meet young people who are richer and poorer, more traveled and less traveled than they are, meet many different kinds of people, try their hands, however briefly, at many different kinds of things. Before they make their choices, they should be confronted with enough of the choices they could make to keep their decisions from hardening too soon or too narrowly.

A boy's daydream of being the first man to land on the moon may contain within it his ambition to become an Army pilot or a member of the ground crew on whom the safety of a plane depends. An adolescent dream of becoming a great musician may later shape a decision to work in a record shop or become a sound technician in a recording studio. Girls who dream of caring for a hundred needy children will be using these dreams in caring for their own children. The quieter and soberer decision will nevertheless be a different decision if it is made with some sense of all that could be, might be done in the world. But without this wider framework within which many different solutions may be found, much of the creative energy of adolescence may be wasted.

For some young people, however, it is not the lack of a wider framework that cramps their ambitions and dims their hopes, but rather the sense that there is too great a gap between what they could be—in their own, or their parents' or their teachers' dreams—and what they now are. The desire to be an architect may be blocked by an inability to read well or to speak grammatically, the desire to be a physicist by poor training in mathematics, the desire the navigate a ship by ignorance of the sea and the kind of knowledge that would

be required. All over the country, there are young people who need help in finding some next steps, smaller and more possible than the leap ahead they see as hopeless and yet necessary. What they need is some idea of next steps which will start them off from where they are now and lead them toward an attainable goal—which can then be revised as they approach success. These adolescents are found in very underprivileged parts of big cities, in small out-of-the-way communities; as children, some of them apparently were given everything by parents, who smothered them in their own ambitions. Usually their own parents cannot help them. These are the young people to watch for among one's children's friends, in the small village near a summer resort, among the children on the next block, and, particularly if one is a teacher, among the young people one teaches. How are they to gain the freedom to come to grips not only with the possibility of having the sort of life their immediate background encourages or discourages, but also an entirely different one?

In many other kinds of societies, adolescents do not have freedom to become something else. In some societies, the son of a farmer must farm and the son of a fisherman must fish, and one's religion and occupation



and the kind of girl a boy can marry and the kind of boy a girl can marry are all determined by who one's parents or foster parents are. In societies like these, where everything is settled for adolescents, the great spurt of growth, the change into a mature body capable again of the intense feeling of a young child, does not provide any such creative experience. Boys and girls mature, court each other, marry, settle down to the occupations of their parents, and follow their parents'

ways. But in the United States and in any modern society—which is now beginning to include all the world—things are changing so fast that it takes longer to grow up and one grows up to a different world from the world of one's parents. It is a world of new possibilities, possibilities which one's own parents never knew, which no one's parents ever knew.

Adolescence began to be a time of struggle and excitement as soon as choice came into a civilization—even the choice not to be a king or not to be an artist although one was born into the right family. With the opening of new possibilities—when the same individual can become a college president or a mechanic, a chicken farmer or a stockbroker, a poet or a policeman—the changes in the body and the changes in the future come together for every adolescent whose eyes are open to the future.

This sense of possibility takes different forms in boys and in girls. Girls have an overriding desire to marry and have children, a sense of the self as wife and mother which is often so strong that a sense of the self as an individual is lost. High civilizations have protected girls during this period in order to give them a chance to grow a little older and to get used to the impulses which seem so new to them, to get used to their new personality. Otherwise the upsurge of a sense of being a grown woman may sway a girl toward a marriage which will not work. For most girls, marriage before they have had a chance to try out their minds and their skills, before they have discovered what kinds of individuals they could be, means that they never will discover what they could have become. Twenty years later, their children grown, without education or background, their lives often seem empty, shorn of dignity, and without freedom.

For boys, almost always later than for girls, adolescence is also a period which can be short-circuited in too circumscribed an environment. And it is necessary to recognize in how many different ways different adolescents may use their new energy, their sense of new powers and new strengths. In some young people, this creative outburst is taken out in simple acts of speed and power, in owning a car and driving it fast. In others it takes the form of falling in love, and the chosen girl or boy is endowed with all the excitement of finding out about love. In some it may take the form of deep friendship or hero worship for someone of one's own sex. The sense of intensity may lead to religious excitement, to dedication, to political idealism. It may lead to the discovery of special aptitudes for science or the arts or politics. But whatever form it takes, adolescents need time to absorb the new dreams and new directions, time to sort out the real from the unreal, time to measure ability against ambition without too much heartbreak, time to become part of the future and to make the future part of themselves.

The casualties of our society are the young people for whom this opening up of possibilities does not happen, who are not given, do not take the needed time. These are the young people who plunge into some form of substitute adulthood—race hotrods, dress like artists rather than working at becoming artists, marry and become parents without growing up. They are the adolescents who drift into gang life and choose easy power rather than the discipline of a political or business career, who prefer easy money and buying power to the more arduous work of studying or learning a skill. We have exposed them too much and protected them too little. We have taught them to want what they cannot have or have failed to teach them what they could have become. It is here that the earlier failures in the home, in the school, in the neighborhood, and in the community show up.

But each adolescent whose home has provided him with some of the things he now

needs—trust and self-confidence, knowledge of ways of testing out his own aptitudes or of exploring new ideas, poetry or music to form a landscape of the spirit within which new moods will have their place—each such adolescent becomes the focus of growth for his or her companions. Just because the opinions of the peer group are so important, each adolescent whose childhood has been fortunate can make all the difference to other adolescents less fortunate, whose imagination and trust and curiosity have not been cherished and fed. To solve our problems of children who become truant and retarded in school, children who become delinquent because no provision has been made for them, whose lives have been narrowed and broken, whose talents may be utterly lost, we need concerted action by whole communities, by States, in the Nation. To protect all our children—those of our Nation and of all other nations, friendly and unfriendly—we need concerted action on a worldwide scale. Parents will differ in the extent to which, as citizens or in their working lives, they can help establish these wider ways of cherishing children and young people. But all parents who have been able to cherish their own children make a contribution to many children, first in the neighborhood and in school and then among the clusters of adolescents who gather together and complement one another and help one another become men and women who will continue to grow.

Because words have to be arranged on a page—each phrase and sentence and paragraph coming after the one before—it has been necessary to set everything down as a sequence, as if every parent in the land were just now becoming the new parent of a new baby and never before had brought up any children. If pictures could be used instead of words, it would be possible to show all the kinds of families and all the moments of decision at once. It would be possible to see at one time pictures which would include the millions of American parents: those with one child and those with five or ten children, parents whose youngest child is now 2 or 12 or 16 years old, parents who have decided to do something different with the second baby or with the last born baby—the baby who used to be called a "frost blossom" and now is called a "do-it-yourself grandchild." Among all these parents, there would be the ones who gave a great deal of time and thought to making a beautiful, creative environment for a little child and who are now so discouraged by his present phase, in which he does nothing but talk baseball from morning till night, or watch TV, or argue about the standing of name bands, that they have almost decided it was not worth it. And perhaps the next younger children will be robbed of an equally beautiful early childhood before the parents discover that the first child, who for a while seemed so wrapped up in one game or one hobby, really did absorb everything and at 16 is becoming a delightful person with eyes open to the world and to the sky, remembering the past and moving into the future.

As children grow, each age gives parents special chances. For the newborn, parents can determine the start and be sure that whatever happens, the future will be safer. For school-age children, they can finds ways of providing all kinds of opportunities, many of which young people will seek out for themselves. The teenager who never danced in his mother's arms may begin to dance with a sense of discovery and an intensity which is terrifying to adults who never responded to music in any form. The experiments in wearing costumes and playing Lone Ranger, or Pocahontas, or Superman, or Davy Crockett, or Sleeping Beauty, or spaceman and spacewoman, which children may have missed at 5 years, may appear in the make-believe of teenage fads in dress and manners. In turn, the mother who is just now learning how to help her third child be creative as a 4-year-old may suddenly find herself with a new understanding of the older children. So, too, the father who skipped his first son's babyhood, waiting for the years when they could play

catch, may now, in discovering his fourth child's creativity, also discover his adolescent son's.

So, young people whose early childhood did not provide a ground plan for their relationship to themselves, to the world, to other people, are given a new chance to find themselves in adolescence. Parents who thought very little of what they were doing with their young children can provide support for new interests and ambitions. Communities which have neglected their elementary schools can develop high schools in which special allowance is made for those whose early education was empty and unimaginative. The whole community—industry, government, the services—can unite in providing space and time and situations in which young people can experiment with an as-if world before they settle down to dignity and freedom in a real world.

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1963 O—681130

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